



Predictive Indicators of Job Loss

At this stage of your grant, you're focused on the employment and retention rates of your program's graduates. By maintaining contact with employed graduates and their employers you may identify graduates who are at moderate to high risk of job loss and providing them with job retention assistance. This Bulletin includes several indicators of job loss, pertinent questions to ask your employed graduates and their supervisors, tips for responding to these warning signs, and strategies to maximize employment retention rates.

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Workers lose employment for a variety of reasons, whether by dismissal or self-initiated departure. While poor performance is probably the most cited reason for being dismissed from a job, others include poor attendance and punctuality, failing to follow directions or company policies, and bringing personal problems to the workplace. An employee may choose to leave employment if the job does not meet their expectations or if they don't feel valued by their supervisor or co-workers. Other reasons for leaving employment include feeling overworked or micromanaged, not fitting into the culture of the company, and believing that the company offers few prospects for advancement. While there is not set "script" that should be used when you follow-up with a graduate or their employer, there are a number of questions that can be asked to identify the risks associated with job loss and provide opportunities for job retention interventions.

The matrix below presents the risk of job loss based on the perceived satisfaction expressed by the employer and employee. The greater degree of satisfaction possessed by both parties, the lower the risk of job loss.

It is possible for an employee to be satisfied with their job and be unaware that their employer is not satisfied

with their performance. Likewise, it is possible for an employer to be satisfied with an employee who expresses dissatisfaction with their job. In both of these cases, there is a risk of job loss. This makes it necessary to touch base with both the employee and the employer when making follow-up calls.



Predictive Indicators of Job Loss and How You Can Help

Demonstrating a lack of enthusiasm

A lack of enthusiasm is a significant warning sign, especially if the graduate was eager to begin work upon completion of their course of instruction.



How you can help



A good way to assess a graduate's attitude about work is to ask an open-ended question: "How is it going for you at work?" If the program graduate responds without enthusiasm (for example, "It's a job."), seek more information. You can ask, "You don't sound enthusiastic about work. Are you having a problem? Is there anything I can do to help?"

Use a job loss assessment ruler to identify their risk of job loss. ("On a scale of one to ten with one being highly likely and ten being highly unlikely, where are you?") If, for example, the graduate points to six, ask, "What would it take to get you to seven or eight?"

Check-in with the employee's supervisor and assess their perception of the program graduate's attitude towards work. If their perceptions are similar, the risk of job loss is high. Keep the graduate focused on their long-term career plan. Provide them with a copy of the **Individual Career Plan for Advancement** and review it with them. Remind them that the job is a stepping stone that will allow them to reach their long-term goal.

Not getting along with co-workers



If an employee feels "out of place" and is isolated from his or her co-workers, they are at greater risk of job loss. This can be determined by asking how they are getting along with their co-workers. (For example, "How are you fitting-in with the others here?")

How you can help



If they are not fitting-in, they can be given guidance on how to build relationships and become a team member. You can encourage them to join a co-worker for lunch or show an interest in a co-worker's favorite sports team. If you know other employees at the worksite, you may want arrange for them to mentor the graduate. You also want to ask their supervisor how well the program graduate is getting along with co-workers.



A supervisor may be able to help by assigning them to work on a project with their co-workers or having them engage in a team-building activity.

If a workplace conflict is evident, provide the program graduate with guidance on resolving disagreements. This might include staying calm, using active listening, and seeking win-win situations.

Not meeting the expectations of supervisors



The fastest way to get dismissed from employment is not to meet the expectations of a supervisor. Ask the employee about his or her attendance and lateness record, their ability to efficiently complete job tasks, how the quality of their work is perceived, and how well they are getting along with their supervisor. Do they feel overworked or micromanaged? Are they able to meet the physical and mental demands of the job? If they complain about being assigned work that is not in their job description that may be a warning sign that they are not getting along with their supervisor. If a program graduate has not been employed for a considerable period of time, they may not be aware of the rise in workplace expectations that has taken place.

How you can help



Empathize with them, give them positive feedback for their work accomplishments, and encourage them to take steps that will help them cope with the demands of the job. Coach them to meet or exceed the expectations of their supervisor. Ask them to consider the following question each day: "How can I make my supervisor's job easier?"

Confirm the employer's expectations and offer the program graduate solutions for coping with their situation. Touch base with the employee's supervisor to determine their level of satisfaction with the program graduate and what can be done to improve their performance.

Failing to balance job and personal demands

After an extended period of absence from the workforce, a program graduate may be surprised by how little time is available to deal with personal and family issues. Failure to balance one's work and

personal obligations can lead to poor job performance and job loss.

How you can help

 During your contact with employed program graduates, ask them about any challenges they may be facing at home. Are they able to make ends meet? Are their housing circumstances adequate? Do they have adequate child care? Be prepared to offer assistance and guidance, either directly or through referral, as required. If financial issues are a concern, review the Bulletin [Resources You Can Use to Help Students Cope with Financial Pressures](#) to identify resources that can be used to resolve these problems.

How often should follow-up contact be made?

While there is no fixed rule for making follow-up contact with employed program graduates, many programs find it useful to make contact at the end of the first day, weekly for the first month of employment, and monthly after that. More frequent contact can be made if there are indicators of job loss and less if both the employer and the program graduate express a high degree of satisfaction. It's also useful to have contact with both employer and program graduate around the time the first job performance review is scheduled. This will give you some insight into what additional improvements need to be made and how well your program's training has served the employer's needs.